

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TUNIS 3320

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TS
SUBJ: TUNISIAN PREMIER ENDORSES SADAT

REF: STATE 114882

1. HAPPILY I HAD A CHANCE TO READ REFTEL JUST BEFORE AN HOUR-LONG TALK MAY 6 WITH PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA. (OTHER ITEMS COVERED IN SEPTELS.) HE STATED HE WISHED TO CONVEY AN IMPORTANT BIT OF ADVICE TO WASHINGTON ON MIDEAST MATTERS: THE U.S. MUST NOT LET SADAT'S INITIATIVE TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT FAIL AND THE U.S. MUST NOT PROVIDE EGYPT WITH MERE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BUT RATHER HELP SADAT SOLVE ITS BASIC PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

2. SADAT, SAID NOUIRA, IS THE REAL KEY NOT ONLY TO AN ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE BUT TO THE WHOLE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST. IF HIS GALLANT INITIATIVE FAILS AND HE FEELS OBLIGED TO LEAVE THE SCENE--OR IF HE IS OUSTED FROM WITHIN--THOSE WHO ARE LIKELY TO SUCCEED HIM WOULD PROBABLY BE PEOPLE WHO WILL TAKE EGYPT BACK TO THE NASSER ERA. AS THE KEystone OF THE ARAB NATION, EGYPT IN THE HANDS OF
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XENOPHOBIC ELEMENTS WOULD REPRESENT A DANGER TO ALL ARAB STATES; THEY COULD BECOME "THE NEW ROMANS OF THE ARAB WORLD," A FORCE THAT MODERATE ARAB STATES COULD NOT RESIST. THIS MUST NOT HAPPEN. SADAT'S CONFIDENCE AND FAITH IN THE U.S. PARTICULARLY AND THE WEST IN GENERAL MUST BE JUSTIFIED. CHAOS IN EGYPT AFTER SADAT'S FALL WOULD MEAN THE RETURN OF THE SOVIETS TO EGYPT. UNDER

SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, "THEY WOULD NOT SEND THE CUBANS; THEY WOULD ARRIVE THEMSELVES IN GREAT NUMBERS" AND THEY WOULD HAVE THEIR PLANS READY TO REDUCE THE ARAB STATES TO DOMINATION THROUGH AN EGYPT WHICH THEY WOULD KNOW HOW TO CONTROL.

3. NOUIRA CONTINUED, SAYING THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS DISTINCT PROBABILITY WITH PRINCE FAHD ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABI. FAHD, HE SAID, AGREED WITH HIM AND AGREED THAT SADAT'S SUCCESS IS THE HINGE ON WHICH THE FUTURE OF THE ARAB MODERATES SWINGS. HE PLEADED WITH FAHD TO BE UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENT WITH SADAT BUT ABOVE ALL TO BE GENEROUS WITH EGYPT AND HELP FINANCE HER DEVELOPMENT.

4. I TOOK THIS OCCASION TO GIVE NOUIRA THE BENEFIT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT THINKING ON THE NEXT STEPS IN THE ME AS WE SEE THEM, MAKING POINTS OUTLINED IN REFTTEL. I STRESSED WASHINGTON'S COMPLETE AWARENESS OF SADAT'S KEY ROLE AND OF OUR OPTIMISM, DESPITE UPS AND DOWNS, REGARDING CHANCES FOR ADVANCING THE PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE WHICH SADAT WANTS AND WHICH EGYPT NEEDS PRECISELY TO ALLOW IT TO TURN TO ITS BASIC PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT. I APPLAUDED HIS PLEA FOR MORE SAUDI AID FOR EGYPT'S DEVELOPMENT AND MENTIONED THE CURRENT U.S. EFFORTS BEING MADE TOWARD THIS GOAL.

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